

THE ST. JOSEPH OBSERVER

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PASSING THE DUCK—ARBUCKLE

No matter how foul or brutal a crime a man may commit, there are always people standing ready to offer an excuse for him, and lay the blame on someone else. It is this sort of sentimental twaddle that makes for moral flabbiness and converts backbones into dish rags, and it is exhibited in full flower, of course, in the case of the self-wrecked buffoon, "Fatty" Arbuckle.

"Rum" has perhaps first call on the list of evils held responsible for Fatty's sins. Following along in its trail come the loose life of the movie camps, wild women, money, prohibition, tax law enforcement, cigarettes, automobiles—every player writes his own card. But perhaps the cleverest bit of buck passing done by any of them comes from Marshall Neilan, motion picture director, who fastens the blame squarely on the public, and on several counts.

"It was the public that made Fatty," he says. "It was the public that lured him into money. I am sorry the public did not stand by him at least till he was proved guilty. If Arbuckle committed the crime with which he is charged it was the fault of bad liquor. And prohibition laws are to blame for the bad liquor."

The wicked public! It applauded its victim. It showered him with money. Then it forced bad liquor on him and drove him to crime. And when he gets caught at it the public callously derides him and darts anybody to show another one of his pictures.

It is the sort of stuff to draw tears from the eyes of the sort of people that such stuff appeals to—inverts, whose skins are filled with mush, and who can see no difference except circumstance and opportunity between men who lead Fatty Arbuckle lives and men who don't.

Isn't it about time it occurred to someone to place the blame squarely where it belongs—on Arbuckle himself?

He knew what he was about when he arranged the party, having been so many another such party before.

He knew what effect too much liquor, good or bad, would have on him, having imbibed plenty of liquor before.

He knew what the combination of wild men and women and liquor in the privacy of a hotel suite would mean.

He promoted and planned the debauchery, intending the natural consequences of his own acts.

He did it because he is that kind of man, by choice, and by a long course of training.

The law of man quite properly holds him responsible, and so does the law of God. Not whisky, not his companions, not the public, not anything or anybody but himself. Not on this occasion alone but on many another there had come to him the opportunity to choose between good and evil. The same as all the rest of us he was tried out in the workings of the infinite plan of Him "who did with pitfall and with gin beset the path we are to wander in." He made no effort to avoid the pitfalls. He put up no fight. He did more than weakly to surrender to wrong—he eagerly sought and embraced it.

There is altogether too much preaching of the soft and sentimental philosophy that the sinner himself is not to blame for his sin. There is too much of passing the buck—to whisky, to society, to God himself. Men and women who know right from wrong, good from evil, and who have the privilege to choose between them, are entitled to credit or blame according as their free choice is made.

Arbuckle's was a free choice. He was the master of his own fate and he bowed out his own destiny.

THOSE WHO WOULD BENEFIT
The proposal to do away with all taxes on excessive profits and also to reduce the surtax on very large incomes, from 65 to 25 per cent, is characterized by Senator Hitchcock as against public interest and the great increase of these fortunes he refers to as merely "capital increases" which "each year add enormously to the matter of the few," and should

be limited and restricted by taxation. In this connection Henry H. Klein, first deputy commissioner of accounts of the city of New York, has given us a volume entitled "Dynastic America, and those who own it," which gives us a list of 498 American families whose fortunes range from \$20,000,000 up to \$2,500,000,000. Rockefeller, of course, heads the list. Then come the houses of Astor, DuPont, Guggenheim and Vanderbilt with \$200,000,000 each; Harkness, \$400,000,000; Mellon, Pratt and Weyerhaeuser, \$300,000,000; Armour, Ford, Gould, Morgan, Payne-Whitney, William Rockefeller, \$200,000,000; Baker, Brady, Carnegie, Clark, Field, Frick, Gould, Harriman, Hill, Swift, Taylor-Payne, \$150,000,000. In addition there are fourteen with \$100,000,000 each, twenty-two with \$75,000,000; eighty-three with \$50,000,000, and 353 whose fortunes range from \$50,000,000 down to a beggarly \$20,000,000.

These are the vast estates that grow by what they feed on. It is their combined power that puts them in control at every strategic position in our industrial, financial and commercial life. And from year to year, from generation to generation, these fortunes pile up higher and higher, because the incomes they receive are so large that it is beyond the power of their owners to spend them. As Senator Hitchcock says, they are so large they cannot be used as income. They are merely capital increases. And as this capital fund concentrated in a few hands grows ever larger, the power of good fortune and bad wielded by its owners over the lives and opportunities and occupations and rights and happiness of the rest of us grows greater and more menacing.

Senator Hitchcock defends the policy of a democratic administration in saying that two-thirds of the mounting incomes accruing from such colossal fortunes shall be taxed into the public treasury. A republican house of representatives says that only one-third shall be taken by taxation, and now comes Secretary Mellon, himself a notable beneficiary of any reduction, and demands that the tax be reduced to one-fourth.

There is created here an issue that will grow in importance as the country comes to understand it. And the issue will be the sharper because this enormous reduction in the taxation on great wealth is proposed at a time when people with more modest incomes stagger under a tax burden that is reducing their standard of living, and when congress, to meet a growing deficit, is reaching out for new forms of taxation to be levied on consumption rather than on wealth.

It was "dynastic America" that rallied with its funds and its power at last year's election to reinstall a reactionary government at Washington, and it is "dynastic America" that is now to profit by a reactionary revision of the tax and revenue laws.

THE RECORD DOWN TO DATE

Despite the obituary and eulogy pronounced by Ambassador Harvey, the League of Nations is again in session and seems to be getting along fairly well. New problems are before it, and there will be much hot debate, its members, however, are more enthusiastic than they were a year ago, before they had become reconciled to the possibility of America's refusal to sign a member blank.

The league of nations seems destined to live. As Vincent Bryce says, speaking for the best thought of Europe:

"Those for whom I venture to speak, workers who have nothing to do with our respective governments, mean to persevere in supporting it (the league) as the only plan yet launched with a prospect of success. We are nearer to the conflagration than you (the United States) are, but prairie fires spread fast."

For the benefit of those who, misled by political bunk, may have the idea that the league of nations is a joke, a brief review of the achievement of that body for the world's betterment in its first year may be enlightening. These activities include:

War between Sweden and Finland over the possession of the Åland islands averted.

War between Lithuania and Poland averted.

Scheme for the relief of Austria worked out.

League has successfully supervised the fight on the typhus plague in Poland.

League has secured the repatriation of 224,950 persons who were still prisoners of war.

A commission set up by the league has prepared the complete machinery for a permanent court of international justice. Forty nations have signed the statute creating the court.

League has set up complete organizations, which are governing the free city of Danzig and the Saar basin.

League has secured the registration of sixty-nine treaties between various nations.

Commissions set up by the league

have prepared reports looking to the suppression of the opium and white slave evils, and also one on progressive disarmament.

THAT WASHINGTON "HELP" STILL THERE

Of course you can remember the vast flood of oratory and the bales upon bales of literature turned loose during the last campaign by the republicans over "the vast army of unnecessary federal employees in Washington?" You remember that afternoon when the present governor of Missouri spoke so vehemently and oh so bitterly of that vast aggregation, when he talked to you in the Auditorium?—and the other gop fellows big and little who came along all summer and who told us that the wicked democrats had turned loose a flock of locusts on the people in the form of tax-eaters, and they were devouring the public substance. "We pledge ourselves," the republican platform declared, "to the elimination of unnecessary officials and employees." And the campaign text book estimated a saving to the taxpayers, from this source alone, of at least \$300,000,000.

That was the promise. What has the performance been? On January 1 there were 643,756 civilian employees in the government service.

On August 1, after five months of republican control of all branches of the government, the number was 614,755.

This is a reduction of \$2,951, or 4 1/2 per cent of the total.

It compares with a reduction of almost 50,000 made by the democratic administration during the last five months of 1920.

One of two conclusions is forced. Either the Harding administration has failed to deliver what it pledged, or the democratic administration, in respect of number of employees, was 95.5 per cent at the time it was so unsparringly attacked.

THE POOR MUST PAY THE TAXES

Read this Washington dispatch which appeared in one of the current issues of the Des Moines Register, one of the best Republican papers of the country, this week:

"Senator Smoot predicted that unless some law to stop the issuance of tax exempt securities is passed the 'American people will wake up one of these days with a tax burden from which they can never hope to get free.'"

Senator Smoot, who is recognized as one of the leading Republicans of the day, is least given to exaggeration of any of the men in Washington who really know about national affairs. He never speaks in oratorical phrase.

Senator Smoot estimates our national tax burden at \$5,000,000,000 within the next five years. That will be an increase of substantially five times from pre-war taxes.

What this item of tax free bonds, drainage, school, farm loan and others, really means was illustrated when a mortgage company approached the Marshall Field estate to learn why it was no longer in the market for farm mortgages. He was informed that as taxes now are farm loans must bear 14 per cent interest to equal tax free bonds as an investment for anybody in the high surtaxes.

There are varying estimates of the amount of tax free bonds outstanding, ranging from \$19,000,000,000 to \$25,000,000,000. At either figure these bonds are enough to relieve the big money holders of an enormous burden of taxation. This means that the \$5,000,000,000 of annual taxes will fall almost wholly on the masses of the people.

We might just as well be facing the facts of the situation as to be deluding ourselves with talk of the petty economies of congress here and there. We have launched into an enormous scheme of military preparedness and we must pay for it. We shall be as heavily taxed as any people of Europe ever have been if we keep on in this course we are now in.

CREDIT THE FEDERAL DUCK LAW

Down at Lake Contrary, Mud Lake, Singleton and Sugar Lakes and all along the Missouri river bottom there has been a bombardment heard since last Friday—and fine strings of ducks brought into St. Joseph—and if cold weather persists in Canada, the hunting season may be said to be practically on—and even at this distance, while a few stray straw hats are yet noted on the streets, and business men in shirt sleeves underneath them, we are pretty safe in prophesying good hunting.

For this fact all credit must go to the treaty law between the United States and Canada that forbids spring shooting, thus protecting the game birds during their mating and nesting season.

The most vociferous opponents of the anti-spring shooting law have now been converted, and this law statute is stamped with general approval.

Word from the duck nesting re-

gions of the sandhills and the Dakotas tells us that the birds are so plentiful that an ordinary baseball bat may become as effective a weapon as a shotgun.

May the eager booted gunmen of the cities and towns enjoy their two months of fun to the utmost, for they deserve it, having observed the spring edict almost to a man.

AND STILL WE SMOKE

When he taught it how to smoke and enjoy the "filthy weed," did old Sir Walter Scott set the white race a bad example?

That question is still unanswered but smoking goes steadily forward.

But the paid and the unpaid reformer both say that the use of tobacco cuts life short, and must stop. Back comes a man, 56 years young, and declares that were it not for his pipe he would have been dead long ago. Then the brain-worker steps up and points out that nothing soothes like a good smoke. The hardy laborer, sitting at rest after the noonday lunch, pulls out his tobacco pouch and his cornucopia and sends upward wreaths of blue smoke; the busy man of affairs lights his cigar and rests his feet on an elevation when his refreshments have been taken, claiming that such an indulgence gives him renewed power to go forward; the man on the farm, in the mines, on the transportation lines—land and water; on the street, and at home when the day's work is done, enjoys his smoke and wonders, as the years multiply, why so much fuss about something that affects him and nobody else.

Quite true, many men who have smoked are now dead. Equally true, many men who never smoked are dead. So, little is proved there. Death comes to all alike—the silvery chord is snapped and we cease to exist on this earth. But did the use of tobacco hurry the end? That is a question as yet unanswered—except by those who strive to rid the world of one of man's pleasures—his old, well-polished pipe.

WHY FOOD PRICES HAVE ADVANCED

The Department of Labor in its report for August shows that there was a marked rise in the retail cost of food during the month of August. St. Joseph shows a rise of an average of 4 per cent. In thirty of the large cities of the country from which reports were received, the advance was still more.

It is not the Missouri farmers who are getting the benefit of the higher retail prices. Certainly consumers can discover no cause for rejoicing in the higher cost of living. The farmers have been liquidated to death, as everybody knows. Consumers have been patiently waiting for the expected relief, only to be victimized through new forms of exaction.

Obviously it is somewhere between the producers of food and the consumers that the blessings of higher retail prices are absorbed. What has happened is precisely what it was predicted would happen when the Fordney Emergency Tariff Act was passed. That masterpiece of humbuggery was presented to the farmers by a republican high-protectionist congress with the pretended purpose of redressing their grievances and lightening their distress. It has accomplished nothing of the sort. It has put more money in the pockets of speculators in food, who are making the most of their opportunity to enrich themselves by systematic price-raising.

HIS CAUTION WAS ALMOST CANNY

Alleging he was guilty of breach of promise, a blushing young New England spinster of 60 summers and a corresponding number of winters, has filed suit against the estate of her late fiancé. This coy maiden waited thirty-five years for him to make up his mind to use the marriage license which he obtained, when they were both young. He "kept company" with her during all that time and then died before he was able to decide whether it would be safe to plunge into matrimony.

Yankee caution is proverbial, but the case of this New England spinster should come near to establishing a record.

Without examining all the evidence in the case it would seem as if this plaintiff had fairly earned the \$20,000 which she asks the court to adjudge her. On the other hand, it is a large question whether a man who will keep a woman waiting for thirty-five years is worth \$20,000. His cash value by the end of that time, we should say, must have shrunk to about the size of a bolshevik ruble.

WHAT'S BEING INTRODUCED

A bill has been introduced in congress by Representative Herrick of Oklahoma, which would prohibit young women from seeking to go on the stage.

Overseer Volira of Zion City comes

forth with his latest dictum: "When a man is bald it shows that he has brains."

A police magistrate discharged a number of men who were accused of gambling because there was no evidence to prove that they had been gambling. Then he lectured them upon the evils of gambling.

In Aix-les-Bains the fast set enjoy themselves by bathing in a lake in full dress at 3 a. m.

Mrs. Crandall, special agent for the United States social hygiene board, wants orchestras to play faster music so that shimmy, toddle and other hip-to-hip dancers will not have a chance.

What a world! What a world!

Fatty Arbuckle has one more sin to answer for and that is his deception of the children—the little ones, who were so pleased with his work—and who now find what manner of brute he is. This is a large part of his offending—and apparently he is the sort of man to whom the idea that he held a priceless trust in his keeping had never occurred. Probably he would be unable to grasp its meaning if it were suggested to him. It is deplorable that in this modern world there seems no way of preventing even the children from setting up for themselves false idols whose villainous will all too soon betray itself. But for the gross calf like Arbuckle who cheats them, who amears their souls with his own filth, there surely must be reserved an especially hot corner in the nethermost depths of whatever hell there be, equipped to deal adequately with such as he.

The coal men are still sending out their circulars telling people that there is going to be a shortage and to buy at once—and on the heels of that the dispatches announce that our coal barons are now going to capture the coal business of Great Britain which is tied up with labor troubles, and that coal is to be shipped from this side and laid down in London cheaper than the Britons can mine it. Funny, isn't it?

Before anyone will believe

Congressman Volstead's life has been threatened, as he announces from the lecture platform, they will have to be shown more evidence than Volstead's unsupported word. Anyone can say that they were threatened, but when a grandstander makes such an announcement, it is always the policy of the wise to look into it if the grandstander makes a sympathy plea—to help his game.

The inefficiency of the motor busses is again demonstrated and they are shown to be only "fair weather birds." There have been none but spasmodic trips on any of the motor bus lines running into this city except on the paved DeKalb road, since the wet weather set in.

It is almost amusing to watch the News-Press and the Gazette "fight" for the park propositions and abuse people who are honestly against the expenditures. The funny part is that there is no one openly fighting back, and it looks funny to see them "fight" just as if there were.

It only needed a very few moments for Judge A. D. Burnes at Platte City to send Burton, the train robber and bandit, over the road for fifty years. This is the right sort of medicine—the kind that cures such public ills—and Judge Burnes is fearless and will protect society.

It is just as well that Gov. Hyde and state attorney Barrett do not come up here to investigate the gambling situation, for some of our gambling sports are so seductive that the two state dignitaries would not stand the ghost of a show against them.

Rather funny figuring—in one place the two dailies supporting the park proposition tell the people that they should not wait till land got to be \$15,000 an acre, and in the next breath tell them it is not worth anything—or very little at most.

Well! Well! Well!—and Brother Ben has to be cared for! Well, well, Gov. Hyde has been accused of many other things, but it looks like he wants to get "hit across the sore back" by all of them. Well—well Brother Ben—you're it!

The American Legion convention held here this week was a decided success, despite the fact that Uncle Jupe Pluvius did his best as a counter attraction. The soldier boys were made to feel that they were in the hands of their friends.

There were many scared people in St. Joseph this week—the fellows who have their private "hootch stills" at home and who did not like the looks of the federal court in session.

That New York agitator who seeks for advertising purposes to sell mes-

at auction has had his measure taken by the New York police who refuse to allow him to operate. A good ducking in the bay would help such peace disturbing crooks as he.

There are too many prison escapes just now. The sawed-off shot gun in the hands of a guard who has an iron rod up his backbone instead of a fishline, will stop them as fast as anything that is in existence just now.

Possibly it will be just as well for these city to tighten up on the soft drink parlors—for this tightening up process would be relished by the drug stores—which would gather in the soft drink parlors' business.

That's proper! let's have a strong municipal chorus—and that will shut off some of our bickering—for music still has charms "to soothe the savage beast"—of even a Square Dealer.

Richard Burke, the dynamiter who was shot by the Chicago police, stated before he died that "he supplied several labor unions with dynamite." Nice business for labor unions.

St. Joseph should have an aviation field and now that Congressman Faust has said he will help to secure it, no effort should be spared to bring about its success.

We are all feeling sorry that Ewing Herbert has moved back to Kansas, even if he is going to run for governor of that state—which we all hope to see.

The sooner that the gap on South Sixth near the Union station is paved the sooner the people will rise up and call the board of public works blessed.

A great many people will agree with that Wisconsin professor who said that "no one pays any attention to what Bryan says anyhow."

There were none of the standpaters before the federal grand jury, but there were several Square Dealers before Justice Wilson.

It is noticeable that almost all of the banks that are now going into the hands of receivers are those of sunflower Kansas.

Plenty of money in St. Joseph this week—no need to go elsewhere—the Missouri Bankers were here.

Keep at it, Mayor Marshall, and have Frederick Avenue paved this year.

What the Missouri Editors Are Saying

And Should be Well Brownd
A large part of Mr. Arbuckle's well known fat seems to be in the fire.—Kansas City Times.

Must Get Down to Work
Chief Warren Stone says that organized labor "is now facing a crisis." It is, indeed; it must go to work.—Gallatin Democrat.

Don't Want Our Arrangement
Mexico has refused to sign the treaty so kindly arranged by the United States government for her. Oregon says it is too much America and too little Mexico to suit his taste.—Glasgow Missourian.

Good News to the Craig Raisers
The price of cotton has gone up. This ought to be good news to the cotton raisers around Craig. Three cheers for the great Republican prosperity.—Craig Leader.

They Still Use Soap
One thing can be said in favor of Pushville girls who comb their hair so their ears won't show. Our merchants say they are selling just as much soap as they ever did.—Rushville News.

They Make the Lizzie Go
The Standard Oil earned \$27,000,000 in dividends in the last three months and Ford has \$54,000,000 in the bank. Henry makes the Lizzies and John makes them go.—St. Louis Star.

And They Voted That Way
The action of the State Board of Equalization will compel Worth county farm lands to pay over \$17,000 more taxes this year than last according to the actual figures taken from the tax books.

Mound City Might Have

Kansas City is gently chiding herself that Fatty A. was dined, ovationed and brans banded on the occasion of his visit to that city a few months ago. The mayor even pulled off the original stunt of handing Roscoe the key to the city, and the big boy carried it off with him to Chl. Don't

worry, K. C.; Mound City might have been just as foolish about him, if given the opportunity.—News-Jeffersonian.

"We Have Always Been Right"
"Pants Coming Down," says a headline in an advertisement in an exchange. We have always contended that sooner or later suspenders would come back into general use—and now we feel that we have always been right.—Moberly Democrat.

Would Never Have Thought It
Mr. Arbuckle has been dropped from the membership of the Los Angeles Athletic Club. Few persons would suppose from a survey of Mr. Arbuckle's physical frame that he ever had been a member of an athletic club.—Kansas City Times.

Gov. Hyde and the Soldiers
Governor Hyde made a failure of his auto business in Jefferson City, but he is thrifty enough to make it back by depositing soldiers' money in his bank, and paying the interest to his secretary and clerks.—Dade County Advocate.

Under "His Personal" Direction
St. Joseph's fall festival and frontier round-up may or may not have been a fizzle, but either way, the citizens of that place doubtless will always be elated over the remembrance that the thing was under the very personal direction of Fog Horn Clancy.—Tri-County News.

This Makes Him Eligible
Nat Goldstein, present circuit clerk of St. Louis, one of the \$2,500 "Twins" of the Lowden slush fund, is reported to have been agreed upon for appointment as postmaster of St. Louis. He is the choice of Senator Spencer and has not been opposed by Republican National Committeeman Jacob L. Dabier.—Howell County Gazette.

Why It Is? Tell Us?
Why is it that the "big" financiers and financial interests are clamoring for the government to pay the railroads the 500 million claimed due them, and pay it right now, but let the railroads continue to owe the government over 700 million dollars for a long period of time? Looks funny, doesn't it?—Gallatin Democrat.

Wisely Raised the Rate
The insurance companies in Kansas City evidently do not believe much in the claim of Governor Hyde and the Kansas City Star "that crime in Kansas City is decreasing. The rates on burglary insurance are to be increased 10 per cent on account of increasing crime there.—Milan Standard.

More Suckers Dig on "Guarantees"

Now the neighboring chautauquas are over and the various guarantee committees are digging down into their pockets for the deficits. Under the guarantee system, where some Lyceum bureau furnishes the talent, the digging-down into the pockets is invariably the last act on the programme. Up in Holden, the 158 guarantors were assessed \$3.50 each to pay the deficit, while at Mexico it cost the men on the guarantee \$5.50 each. At Farnell, it cost the guarantors \$6.50 apiece, while at Edgerton the 26 subscribers dug down into their weasel skins and dragged up most reluctantly \$15 each. Eldorado Springs was right in fashion, the twenty good and public spirited citizens who signed the chautauqua guarantee being stuck for \$13.13 each. They refused to sign the guarantee for another year. It's a great game, when you go against it. There is no chance to win, but still some places continue to sign up.—Henry County Democrat.

Arbuckle the Spittoon Renovator

Every day we see another example of how the sudden acquiring of wealth will go to people's heads and make darn fools out of them. This time it is Roscoe (Fatty) Arbuckle, the movie fat man—nine years ago he was a spittoon cleaner in a bar room—not a bartender—mind you, just a common spittoon cleaner. He was so fat he attracted the attention of a movie magnate and the coin began to roll in—as the dollars rolled in Fatty's head began to swell. This is always what happens when you pick people up out of the gutter who never had any good breeding, or knew what three square meals a day meant and make millionaires out of them. The girl died from the result of a spree in his apartment? Yes, she went the gait also, and now Virginia Rappe is dead, having paid the price, for the wages of sin is always death. The former spittoon cleaner motored to San Francisco in his \$26,000 car to be locked up in jail on a charge of murder. The fat Mr. Fatty is described as a beast by people who know him, a moral leper. Now he is on the toboggan and as he sowed the wind he will reap the whirlwind.—Milan Standard.